

**Strategic Plan**

**April 2024 – March 2029**

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# Document Control

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**Document References**

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| **In-year operating plan** | Author D Blakey |
| **Carer Journey mapping tool** | Owned and Updated by FSG |
| **Risk Register** | Owned and updated by the Trustee Board |
| **Development Day Reflection** | Author D Jack & L Mordue |

# Introduction

Carers Northumberland (CN) is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered with Companies House.

In addition to developing and delivering a comprehensive range of appropriate, high quality carer support services throughout the county, CN also aims to be the lead agency in the county on all carer issues, including providing a responsive voice for carers and influencing local government, potential new regional government constructs, and NHS policy in respect of carers. These aims will be achieved within the context of setting and maintaining the highest standards in all areas of activity, being a high-quality employer and devising and implementing management systems that reflect best practice.

This plan sets out a high-level direction of travel. It is intended that the organisations' in-year operating plan and day-to-day service delivery objectives will be directed by and developed from, this plan.

# Vision, and Values

**Our Vision is – To improve the lives of unpaid carers in Northumberland**

Carers Northumberland’s vision is underpinned by clear organisational values including:

**RESPONSIVE**

Reacting in a positive and timely manner to all methods of contact.

**TRUSTED**

Trusted by carers to provide accurate, efficient, tailored advice and services. Trusted by partners to action referrals quickly, provide support and act with integrity. Trusted to show up, do what we say we will do, and value carers.

**CARING**

We show kindness, empathy, and compassion for others, with a service that is caring and approachable.

# Strategic Aims

We aim to change the landscape for carers so that:

1. They receive the support they need.
2. The value and role of unpaid carers becomes more widely recognised.

By ensuring the sustainability of Carers Northumberland we will:

* Reach an increased percentage of carers – all ages, all circumstances.
* Provide the right services at the right time in the right place.
* Deliver high quality and effective support.

# Effective Delivery of Quality Services

Effective delivery of quality services will be organised around four key business strands of activity:

**1. Operational Delivery**

Core services

New delivery opportunities and ways of working

**2. Business Management**

Organisational structure

Governance & Management

Marketing & Promotion

**3. People**

Flexible Skilled Workforce

Volunteers

**4. Finance**

Financial Stability

Sustainable

**5.1. Operational Delivery**

*7.177.1 7***Core Services**

Carers Northumberland delivers a core carer support service commissioned by Northumberland County Council to meet its statutory obligations to carers as a local authority. This core work includes support for adult carers of adults, parent carers, and young carers. Carers Northumberland’s key strength is its reputation for being the first point of contact for carer information, advice, and support. This is underpinned by our local reputation, reliability, knowledge, geographical coverage, stakeholder relationships, value for money, strong governance and leadership and teamwork.

5.1.1. Delivery of core services for Adult Carers of Adults as agreed by Northumberland County Council:

* Provide carers in Northumberland with information, advice, and guidance on all caring-related matters and respond to requests for support.
* Accept and respond to referrals from Care Managers in response to Carers’ Needs Assessments.
* Inform carers of their right to an assessment and how to access a Carers’ Needs Assessment.
* Provision of a Telephone Information Service.
* Provision of individual and group support, and opportunities for social breaks from caring.
* Maintain a carer database.
* Work in partnership with the local authority to increase carer awareness within voluntary and statutory sector organisations, including health and social care professionals.
* Make informed responses to consultations when requested by the local authority.
* Maintain ongoing input on issues of shared concern.
* Provide carers in Northumberland with opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and confidence to enable them to fulfil their caring role.

5.1.2. Delivery of core services for Young Carers and Parent Carers as agreed by Northumberland County Council Children’s Services.

 Young Carers:

* Receive referrals.
* Identify and assess young carer needs.
* Support young carers to lead fulfilled lives and access opportunities available to other children by overcoming barriers.
* Ensure young carers have access to appropriate information and support to enable them to maintain their own wellbeing whilst providing care to someone else.
* Ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities to young carers, including transitions into adulthood, using a Transitions Pathway developed in conjunction with NCC, Carers Northumberland, and other stakeholders.
* Raise awareness of young carers, and their needs.
* Working Together.
* Have an active presence within NCC, take a lead role in making the voice of young carers heard and support universal services to understand how they can best meet the needs of young carers in Northumberland.

 Parent Carers:

* Provision of information, guidance, and support, to support their caring role.
* Provide advice and support in approaching statutory agencies for help with all their needs.
* Provide advice and information to parent carers about their rights as carers and someone to talk to who understands their situation.
* Provide access to advice and support from workers who have specialist knowledge of services and caring issues arising from particular health conditions.
* Offer information, advice, and support to parent carers which includes, finance and benefit checks, and searching and applying for grant opportunities where appropriate.
* Carry out follow-up work as per the 2-month and 6-month process for registrations.
* Link with key stakeholders that surround the parent carer.
* Signpost and refer to other statutory and non-statutory services where appropriate.
* Produce and distribute carer information, which includes parent carer information where relevant.
* Enable parent carers to attend any of the carer groups, and any other events, trips, or workshops.

**New Delivery Opportunities and Ways of Working**

Carers Northumberland supports a growing number of carers with a wide range of services. In order to fulfil the vision of supporting an increased number of carers across Northumberland, it is necessary to consider and develop innovative ways of delivering existing services, meeting the demand on resources, increasing capacity, and implementing new initiatives which enhance the offer to carers. We will explore the use of digital platforms to enhance our service provision and reach.

* Carers Northumberland should organise itself so that it has headroom to operate a policy of continuous evaluation/continuous improvement, whether that be adaption of existing services/structure or piloting and developing new ideas. These are explored using the Carer Journey Mapping Tool which is reviewed on a regular basis.
* Carers Northumberland strives for continuous improvement in terms of increased carer reach and service delivery. In addition to the statutory requirements placed on service delivery by funders, the views of carers and service users are of paramount importance and will always be considered when planning new services.
* Build strategic alliances to deliver new services for carers, and work with others where doing so will increase the likelihood of funding, solve key strategic issues, and offer opportunities to develop evidence bases for new forms of service delivery.
* Review and consider how our services are delivered across the geographical area that is served periodically, or when opportunities are presented.
* Be aware that changes in the delivery, method and location of services may require a review of the ongoing suitability of the organisation’s current premises, and review as necessary.

**5.2. Business Management**

**Organisational Structure**

Carers Northumberland serves diverse communities with carers wanting to access services in urban, rural, and often very remote rural areas. The organisation currently operates from a central office in the urban south-east of the county. The ability to provide regular outreach facilities across the wider community is imperative. In order to meet the needs of carers and the demands of funders Carers Northumberland will:

* Source new opportunities to ensure that carer support activity is hosted in accessible, value for money locations including sharing time and space with other organisations where feasible.
* Continue to use community spaces throughout the county where appropriate for the delivery of carer support services.
* Use the Carer Journey Mapping Tool to identify where additional capacity is needed and where opportunities for new roles can be explored.

**Governance and Management**

Carers Northumberland will ensure the continuance of a strong, principled governance structure, and robust management procedures:

* Bi-annual review of the Memorandum & Articles of Association to ensure it continues to provide a robust governing structure. The identification of external factors which may influence the content of the Memorandum & Articles and instigate reviews outside the bi-annual remit where appropriate.
* Quarterly Trustee Board meetings which follow a standard agenda.
* Regular sub-groups meetings as required.
* Bi-annual Trustee Skills Audit and Board Effectiveness Survey.
* Trustee training and development.
* Regular progress meetings between the Chair of Trustees and the Chief Executive.

**Marketing and Promotion**

Carers Northumberland requires continuous promotion to ensure that carers and other organisations who come into contact with carers identify the organisation as the ‘go to’ service for carer support.

Within the remit of a communications strategy, Carers Northumberland will:

* Project a clear public facing brand which is recognisable to carers, funders, donors, and commissioners.
* Ensure that all outward facing publicity and marketing is clear and accessible.
* Promote the 'carer voice' so that where appropriate, other organisations are engaged, aware of, and acting on, carer needs.
* Pro-actively use digital marketing to help carers to self-identify and know where to find support.

**5.3. People**

**Flexible Skilled Workforce**

* Staff and volunteers will have access to mandatory training.
* Staff and volunteers are supported to access professional development opportunities appropriate to their role.
* Policies and procedures are in place relating to staff and HR issues.
* Consideration is given to both permanent recruitment and alternative opportunities such as apprenticeships, fixed term appointments, volunteers, links with colleges, universities, and external consultants.

**5.4. Finance**

**Financial Stability**

Carers Northumberland is funded by a mix of grants, contracts, and donations. In order to ensure financial stability, it is recognised that Carers Northumberland must identify additional funding streams to create an ongoing and more diverse funding base across the organisation. This will be achieved by:

* Robust financial planning and regular monitoring and review.
* Proactive Financial Strategy Group meetings with the prime objective of ensuring financial stability and ongoing financial sustainability, including income generation that fit with the vision and values of the organisation.
* Collation of evidence of the organisations’ impact across all the services offered to maximise opportunities for additional funding and to make the case for appropriate uplifts in core funding.
* Ensuring the organisation is ready and able to respond swiftly to new funding opportunities or changes to funding and contractual agreements.

# Performance Measures

Performance will be regularly measured against a set of agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) which will be developed and reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and documented in the in-year operating plan. Service outcomes set by specific funders will be monitored, and evidence of outcomes included in reports to those funders.

# Risks

Carers Northumberland will monitor risks appropriately at all levels in the organisation, with operational risks being managed by the CEO and strategic delivery risks managed by the Trustees. The Risk Register is reviewed by the Trustee Board at each board meeting for consideration of any significant changes, additions, or deletions.

# Implementation and Review

This plan will be reviewed annually, to ensure it remains a valid, agreed strategy, and to confirm operational priorities for the coming year.

Reviews will consider the views of stakeholders, trustees, and staff, as well as any legislative change, regional and national policy.